

WHAT IS YOUR HEALTH RISK?

Visibility can serve as a good gauge of air quality. The following chart includes guidelines for determining air quality based on visibility. The Air Quality Index (AQI) is an index that tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you. The AQI focuses on health effects you may experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air.

AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI)	VISIBILITY RANGE (miles)
GOOD	10 or more miles
MODERATE	5 - 10 miles
UNHEALTHY (SENSITIVE PEOPLE)	3 - 5 miles
UNHEALTHY	1.5 - 3 miles
VERY UNHEALTHY	zero to 1.5 miles

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Garfield County Environmental Health

<http://www.garfield-county.com/public-health/air-quality.aspx>

Colorado Smoke Management Program

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ap/smoke/ Index.html>

Colorado Air Pollution Control Division:
Fire Information Page

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ap/fireinfo.html>

Upper Colorado River (UCR)

Interagency Fire Management

http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2gjc/

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Upper Colorado River

Interagency Fire Management
Unit

(We are the White River National Forest, Grand Valley Ranger District of Grand Mesa National Forest, Colorado River Valley and Grand Junction Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management and the Colorado National Monument)

Wildland Fire Smoke And Your Health



ROLE OF WILDLAND FIRE

Wildfires can be a threat to life and property. Yet fire also plays a vital role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem, cleaning out Mother Nature's closets to allow for new growth, improved wildlife passage and more diverse wildlife habitat. The nutrients released by fire nourish young sprouts supporting a new cycle of forest, brush and grass.

Fire suppression efforts over the last century have resulted in an unbalanced ecosystem weighted more by areas with dense forests and shrublands. As the density of vegetation grows, so too does the potential to fuel a wildfire. These factors have created today's pattern of catastrophic wildfires which are more intense, harder to control, and put communities and firefighters at risk.

Fire is now widely used as a tool to reduce fuel build-up in forests and rangelands, restore wildlife habitat and reduce the potential of larger, more destructive unplanned fires.

However, no matter if a fire is ignited naturally or by humans, it creates smoke which presents a slight health risk to even healthy people and can be serious for people with pre-existing diseases.

WHO IS MOST SENSITIVE?

- People with pre-existing lung or heart disease including asthma, emphysema, and cardiovascular disease.
- Elderly people, both because everyone's lungs become less efficient with age and because elders are more likely to have chronic respiratory diseases
- Young children (especially 7 years and younger) and pregnant women, both of whom breathe more air per pound of body weight than most of us.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF SMOKE

- Symptoms related to asthma, emphysema, and other respiratory or circulatory problems may occur. Be especially watchful of those who have pre-existing condition.
- While anyone can experience serious symptoms from smoke, by far the more likely consequences for healthy people are minor. Heavy smoke can cause some eye, nose & throat irritation perhaps including limited coughing and mild headaches are fairly likely.
- Light smoke will not noticeably or significantly affect most people's health.

If symptoms persist or become severe, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.

PRECAUTIONS

To minimize smoke's effects on you and your family follow these measures:

Minimize heavy smoke exposure.

- Shorten or skip physical exercise
- Enjoy the outdoors at times when there is the least smoke.
- Encourage children to play indoors or smoky days.
- Under extended days of heavy smoke spend some time in areas where the air is smoke free.

Keep indoor air clean

- Close doors and windows especially at night when smoke tends to settle in low areas. Typically smoke clears by late morning/early afternoon allowing a chance to air out the house.
- Run only a filtered air conditioner, preferably on "recirculate". High-efficiency particle air (HEPA) filters are best.

- Avoid running a swamp cooler, whole house fan or "fresh air ventilation system" as these devices can draw in smoky air indoors. If the heat becomes uncomfortable, cool the house anyway to avoid heat exhaustion. Balance the impacts of heat vs smoke.
- Avoid compounding smoke with other air pollution sources. For example, avoid burning candles or wood or gas stoves. Vacuum and mow when it isn't as smoky.
- Don't rely on dust masks—they do not filter out smoke.

Watch those with known lung or heart disease as well as elders and children.

- Unexpected fatigue, headaches or confusion can indicate heat exhaustion and/or breathing problems.
- Keep inhalers and similar medicines readily available.
- If you notice anything of concern, contact a primary health care provider immediately.

Drink lots of fluids especially when very warm or hot.

Plan Ahead.

- If you know you and/or your loved ones are particularly sensitive to smoke, plan ahead for an alternate place to stay where you will not be impacted by smoke.